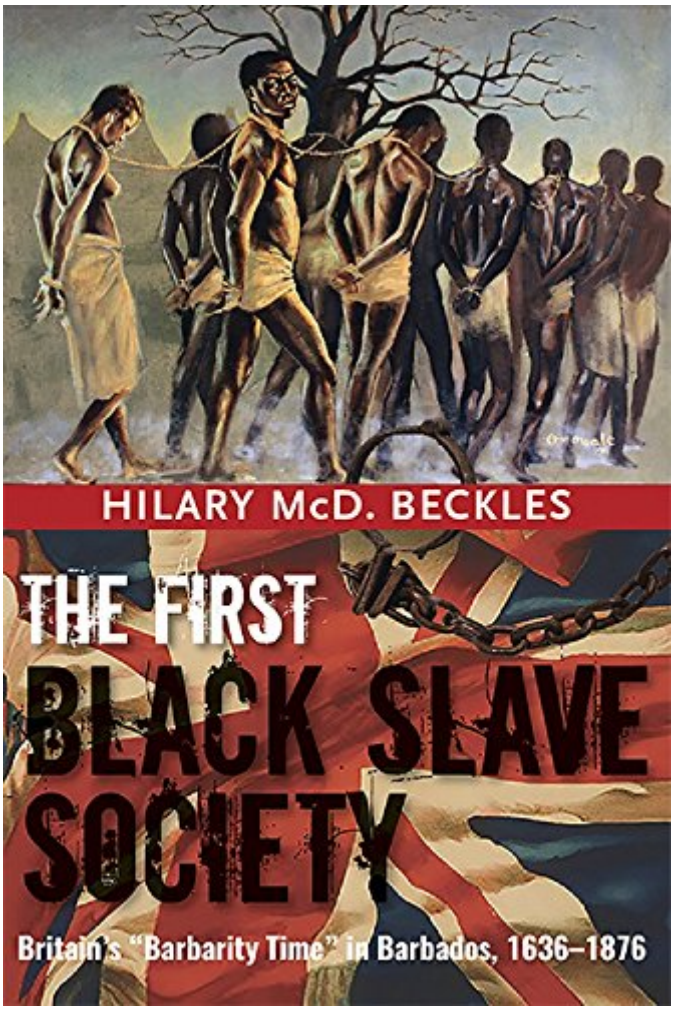
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The First Black Slave Society: BritainÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s Ã¢â‚¬Å“Barbarity TimeÃ¢â‚¬Â• In Barbados, 1636-1876



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Synopsis

Barbados was the birthplace of British slave society and the most ruthlessly colonized. The geography of Barbados was ideally suited to sugar plantations and there were enormous fortunes to be made for British royalty and ruling elites from sugar produced by enslaved, Ã¢â ¬Å“disposableÃ¢â ¬Â• workforce, fortunes that secured BritainÃ¢â ¬â„¢s place as an imperial superpower. The inhumane legacy of plantation society has shaped modern Barbados and this history must be fully understood by the inheritors on both sides of the power dynamic before real change and reparatory justice can take place.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A history of enslavement in Barbados by the British. The ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“disposableÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• workforce created fortunes from sugar farming for the British elite. The book propagates that Britain owns BarbadosÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ blacks a fiscal debt. Beckles looks closely at how Britain structured its first slave-driven economy on the backs of white bonded prisoners before focusing on dehumanizing the black slaves. The chapters in the book are

logically divided into topics such as how white women participated in the enslavement, or how whites ganged up with ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“brownÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• people against blacks. The chapters are also chronologically organized, as a later part looks at how the slave owners turned to breeding slaves rather than buying them, or increased physical punishments. The last section looks at how the previously enslaved people were then forced to work for nearly nothing to pay for their own emancipation. The book is well designed with images of chains and innovative lettering smudges. The cover is composed of two drawings, one is an dramatic paining of African slaves being driven like cattle, and the other is a propaganda poster-like drawing of the British flag. There are some interesting tables and other visuals, such as a table that lists the occupations of the principal organizers of the 1816 War, which includes one African driver, and Creoles that were carpenters, masons, drivers, and domestics (166). There is also a table that shows the ratio of black to white people in Barbados in 1712/5, 2.4, with over twice more blacks, and then in 1816, 4.8, or over four times more blacks. Based on my research into American slavery decades ago, I had assumed that these ratios were a lot higher still, but perhaps they were lower in the Barbados than in the North American South (157). The text is informative and provides philosophical and economic explanations for the shifts in Barbados. For example, Beckles explains the hiring patterns among estate managers: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“who were more concerned about the practical matters of reducing cost of production, controlling rebellious Africans and manipulating the ambitions of free non-whitesÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (94). There is plenty of evidence via cited sources provided, and the detailed Index and Bibliography assist researchers with finding the pertinent information.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •Pennsylvania Literary Journal: Volume IX, Issue 2, Interview with Carol Reardon, Battlefield Guide and Professor

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